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MANAGEMENT COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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A summary of significant events of
interest to USDA management

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Issue #13
June 13, 1975

MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

MANAGEMENT COUNCIL ACTIONS.....

Highlights of May 12 Meeting.....

Within a week, OP will be sending to the agencies for review and input the proposed managerial and executive development training system. (Contact: John Kizler, OP, ext. 76977.)

Verne Bathurst, SCS, discussed the SCS multiple appraisal system of employee evaluation. Each of SCS' 13,000 plus employees is rated by at least 3 separate appraisers in terms of abilities and potential. The appraisals are used to determine promotion and reassignment possibilities, any needed training, and used as the basis of career counseling.

Postponed until another meeting.....

- ... Tour of duty at co-located USDA Offices.
- ... Employee Holiday Leave.
- ... USDA Minority Business Opportunity Committee.
- ... Cooperative Education Program.

Reminders.....

Agency comments on the Executive Development package are due in to Mr. Bolduc.

ADS will present the cost/benefit analysis results of its Requirements Study on June 26 to the Council.

CAMP DAVID MEETING COMPLETED.....Key problems and issues raised by agencies in their meetings with Departmental staff (see Issue #12) were reviewed with the Secretary and Assistant Secretaries at Camp David on June 1-2. OMF is now summarizing the policy guidance received at Camp David. After final clearance with the appropriate Assistant Secretaries this guidance will be provided to agencies for their use in developing their fiscal year 1977 - 1981 program and financial plans. (Contact: Steve Dewhurst, OMF, ext. 73045.)

COUNCIL FEELS OADS CONFERENCE WELL PREPARED AND PRESENTED.....They appreciate the candor and communications at the conference and the written background on each issue. There were some specific concerns which surfaced in the critiques, however. Among those are concern over the balance of work that would be done by the contractor and would be done in-house; the schedule for the proposed B²; and the appearance of a lack of concern for costs and the impact these costs would have on the agencies. All agreed, however, that Mr. Meetze is doing a good job in OADS. (Contact: Richard Bartlett, AMS, ext. 74638.)

INITIAL 1976 FUNDING TO BE UNDER CONTINUING RESOLUTION.....It now appears an appropriations bill will not be enacted by July 1 for USDA. The House will not report the Bill until July therefore, funding will be carried out at the lower of the current or the budget rate. The Congress may grant exceptions to this rate where they see fit. (Contact: Charles A. Jewell, OMF, ext. 76176.)

RECENT LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS.....

Senate Passes Bill Easing Food Stamp Rules.....Presently an applicant is required to be investigated to determine his eligibility; this may take as long as 6 weeks. Under S. 1662 applicants may be authorized to purchase food stamps immediately, if they promise to repay the Government if a subsequent investigation proves them ineligible. Self-certification would not increase the number of people eligible for the program but it would make it easier for people who have recently lost their jobs to obtain prompt food stamp assistance. (Contact: Bob Buchanan, OMF, ext. 72327.)

House Sustains Veto of Strip Mining Bill.....On June 10, they failed to override the President's veto (see issue #12 for background). (Contact: Al Duran, OMF, ext. 74654.)

Mr. Yeutter Confirmed As Deputy Special Trade Representative (Domestic)
The Senate acted on June 6. (Contact: Al Duran, OMF, ext. 74654.)

POLICY REITERATED REGARDING COMMENTS ABOUT INVESTIGATIONS.....It is USDA's policy to refer all matters pertaining to an ongoing investigation to OI whenever a comment is called for -- to the press, to Congress, etc. If anyone is USDA receives an inquiry regarding an ongoing investigation or an alleged wrongdoing, the response may be prepared elsewhere, but **MUST BE COORDINATED** with OI before signature. This is necessary so that neither the investigation nor any following criminal or administrative action will be **prejudiced**. (Contact: Lou Free, OI, ext. 76915.)

NAL TRIES OUT "SOFT SCIENCES" DATA RETRIEVAL SYSTEM.....The New York Times Information Bank is available to Department Personnel by contacting the Social Sciences Reading Room (1052-S) on a trial basis May-June. This is a computerized information retrieval system that pinpoints your desired data by searching through its entire data base in a matter of seconds. Fully informational "abstracts" appear almost instantly on the terminal screen. Over one million abstracts are stored in the Information Bank's "disk" memory. Prime source of data is The New York Times dating back to 1969 plus 60 other worldwide sources. (Contact: Kevin Keaney, NAL, ext. 78010.)

PERSONNEL

PRESIDENT ANNOUNCES SPECIAL COST REDUCTION CAMPAIGN FOR CY 1975.....

Employee suggestions and special achievements which result in benefits of \$5000 or more will be recognized by a personal letter signed by the President. Agencies should develop special programs to stimulate ideas with emphasis on cost-saving suggestions and improved productivity. (Contact: Mae Paulsen, OP, ext. 75618.)

1974 INJURY STATISTICS SHOW LOSS OF MONEY AND WORK.....3,701 USDA employees had injuries which required medical treatment--5,290 lost workdays. There were 1,198 employee-operated vehicles damaged at a cost of \$915,685. Private citizens collected \$206,602 in injury and property damage compensation as a result of accidents involving USDA employees. The Department's medical and compensation costs for CY 1 will exceed \$8,000,000. Ten employees were killed as a result of job-related accident. (Contact: Jim Entwistle, OP, ext. 77654.)

SUPERVISORY PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS STUDIED.....This was done to determine how effectively evaluations were used to recognize good or poor performance. The study covered July-December, 1974. Of the approximately 90,000 USDA permanent employees included, 22 were denied within grade increases and 1,143 were granted quality step increases. (Contact: E. Toth, OP, ext. 76104.)

R.M. (MEL) DAVIS APPOINTED SCS ADMINISTRATOR.....He succeeds Kenneth Grant who retired May 31.

JAMES D. KEAST NOMINATED TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL.....Senate confirmation is required.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

OEO COMMENCES FORMAL ENFORCEMENT ACTION AGAINST PLAST, UKRAINIAN YOUTH ORGANIZATION YOUTH CAMPS.....Plast receives assistance from FNS but has refused to comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which requires that the camps be open to all youth regardless of race, color or national origin. Notices of Opportunity to Request a Hearing have been delivered, which set forth the details of non-compliance and gave Plast 20 days to request a formal hearing. (Contact: Richard Peer, OEO, ext. 77327.)

CENTRAL SERVICES

ADS TO ISSUE GUIDELINES FOR AGENCY REQUESTS FOR TECHNICAL APPROVALS AND DELEGATIONS OF PROCUREMENT AUTHORITY.....The guidelines will be developed in cooperation with OO and will include procedures for submitting requests to ADS and OO. They will also specify the type of information that agencies should provide. (Contact: H. W. Meetze, ADS, ext. 76275.)

GAO REPORT PROMPTS INQUIRIES.....The report on USDA's proposed computer procurement has resulted in publicity and numerous inquiries from newspapers, TV, and Congress. Any requests for interviews or comments should be forwarded to Messrs. Wright, Bolduc or Meetze to assure adequate control, timely response and consistency in the USDA position. (Contact: H.W. Meetze, ADS, ext. 76275.)

ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS

GOVERNMENTWIDE IMPLEMENTATION OF JOINT FUNDING SIMPLIFICATION ACT DELAYED PENDING ISSUANCE OF EXECUTIVE ORDER.....GSA advises that the E.O. is expected to be signed soon. Then, GSA will issue a GSA-Federal Management Circular after receiving Federal agency input to a draft Circular. Agencies will have less than 2 weeks to review the draft. We will ask for additional time from GSA to obtain the views from field offices that participated in the pilot Integrated Grant Administration process. (Contact: Don Manns, OO, ext. 77527.)

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION ADMINISTRATION (EPA) REGULATIONS RE FEDERAL CONTRACTS, GRANTS AND LOANS TO BE IMPLEMENTED SOON.....EPA published regulations (Federal Register of April 16, 1975), that impose conditions on Federal contractors, grantees, and loan recipients under the Clean Air and Water Pollution Control Acts. Implementation for contracts will be handled through the Federal Procurement Regulations. Implementation for grants will be handled through the Departmental Grant and Agreement regulations. Similar provisions will need to be adopted by the lending agencies covering loan programs. Implementation date is July 1, 1975. (Contact: Don Manns, OO, ext. 77527.)

OTHER

71% PARTICIPATE IN SAVINGS BOND CAMPAIGN.....Only 11 agencies exceeded the Departmental average of 71%. Of these 11, only 4 met the goal of 80%. (Contact: Ray Rhodes, ARS, ext. 68401.)